

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended) An in-line formed, non-laminated web, the web having major surfaces in the X-Y plane and a depth in the Z direction, the web suitable for use as a fluid distribution and fluid retention web in a disposable absorbent article, comprising:
- a) a first layer ~~multiple layers~~ of composite material including a first superabsorbent material composition and a second material;
 - b) the ~~multiple layers~~ a second layer of composite material having two different compositions of superabsorbent material, at least one of the two compositions of superabsorbent material being a second superabsorbent material composition different from the first superabsorbent material composition of the first layer;
 - c) at least two of the ~~multiple~~ the first and second layers being in an opposing relation and overlaid in the Z-axis direction of the web thereby creating a superabsorbent material gradient in the Z-direction of the web;
 - d) at least one of the ~~multiple layers~~ the second layer having zones of intermittent ~~material~~ superabsorbent material deposition in one of a machine direction or a cross direction so as to have discontinuous zones of the two different compositions of superabsorbent material in one of the machine direction or the cross direction; and
 - e) whereby the composite web has a Z-direction gradient of different superabsorbent compositions ~~material layers~~; and zones of different ~~material layers~~ intermittently placed in one of the machine direction or the cross direction superabsorbent

compositions within the second layer.

2. (currently amended) An in-line formed web suitable for use as a composite fluid distribution and fluid retention layer in a disposable absorbent article according to Claim 1, further comprising: the gradient further being in ~~a type of absorbent~~ compositions of pulp in each material layer.

3. (currently amended) An in-line formed web suitable for use as a composite fluid distribution and fluid retention layer in a disposable absorbent article according to Claim-2, wherein the ~~type~~ different compositions of absorbent-superabsorbent material may be selected between a species of absorbent such as superabsorbent materials or wood pulps, or selected among a varieties of absorbents within such species having different swelling rates.

4. (currently amended) An in-line formed web suitable for use as a composite fluid distribution and fluid retention layer in a disposable absorbent article according to Claim 1, further comprising: ~~the a gradient~~ further gradient, the further gradient being in an amount of absorbent ~~in each material~~ between the first layer and the second layer.

5. (original) An in-line formed web suitable for use as a composite fluid distribution and fluid retention layer in a disposable absorbent article according to Claim 1, wherein the amount of absorbent is varied by weight percent.

6. (currently amended) An in-line formed web suitable for use as a composite fluid distribution and fluid retention layer in a disposable absorbent article according to Claim 1, further comprising: ~~the gradient~~ a further gradient, the further gradient being in a ~~type~~ composition of thermoplastic fiber in the first layer and the second layer ~~each material layer~~.

7. (currently amended) An in-line formed web suitable for use as a composite fluid distribution and fluid retention layer in a disposable absorbent article according to Claim 6, wherein ~~the gradient is a~~ the further gradient comprises a change in type of polymer used for the thermoplastic fibers.

8. (currently amended) An in-line formed web suitable for use as a composite fluid distribution and fluid retention layer in a disposable absorbent article according to Claim 6, wherein the further gradient comprises a change in ~~the gradient is a~~ denier of the thermoplastic fibers.

9. (currently amended) An in-line formed web suitable for use as a composite fluid distribution and fluid retention layer in a disposable absorbent article according to Claim 1, further comprising: a further gradient, the further gradient being in an amount of thermoplastic fiber in the first layer and the second layer ~~each material layer~~.

10. (original) An in-line formed web suitable for use as a composite fluid distribution and fluid retention layer in a disposable absorbent article according to Claim 9, wherein the amount of thermoplastic fiber in each material layer is varied by weight percent.

11. (currently amended) An in-line formed web suitable for use as a composite fluid distribution and fluid retention layer in a disposable absorbent article according to Claim 1, further comprising: a further gradient, the further the gradient being in differing densities of the first layer and the second layer~~material layers~~.

12. (currently amended) An in-line formed web suitable for use as a composite fluid distribution and fluid retention layer in a disposable absorbent article according to Claim 1, further comprising: a further gradient, the further the gradient being in differing thicknesses of the first layer and the second layer~~material layers~~.

13. (currently amended) An in-line formed web suitable for use as a composite fluid distribution and fluid retention layer in a disposable absorbent article according to Claim 1, further comprising: the zone further being intermittent in a ~~type of absorbent~~composition of pulp in each material layer.

14. (currently amended) An in-line formed web suitable for use as a composite fluid distribution and fluid retention layer in a disposable absorbent article according to Claim 13, wherein the ~~type~~ different compositions of superabsorbent material

~~absorbent may be~~are selected between a species of absorbent such as superabsorbent materials or wood pulps, or selected among a varieties of absorbents within such specieshaving different swelling rates.

15. (original) An in-line formed web suitable for use as a composite fluid distribution and fluid retention layer in a disposable absorbent article according to Claim 1, further comprising: the zone further being intermittent in an amount of absorbent in each material layer.

16. (original) An in-line formed web suitable for use as a composite fluid distribution and fluid retention layer in a disposable absorbent article according to Claim 15, wherein the amount of absorbent is varied by weight percent.

17. (currently amended) An in-line formed web suitable for use as a composite fluid distribution and fluid retention layer in a disposable absorbent article according to Claim 1, further comprising: the zone further being intermittent in a ~~type~~composition of thermoplastic fiber in each material layer.

18. (currently amended) An in-line formed web suitable for use as a composite fluid distribution and fluid retention layer in a disposable absorbent article according to Claim 17, wherein the ~~gradient zone is a type~~further intermittent in of polymer composition of polymers used for the thermoplastic fibers.

19. (currently amended) An in-line formed web suitable for use as a composite fluid distribution and fluid retention layer in a disposable absorbent article according to Claim 17, wherein the ~~gradient zone~~ is a further intermittent in densier of the thermoplastic fibers.

20. (currently amended) An in-line formed web suitable for use as a composite fluid distribution and fluid retention layer in a disposable absorbent article according to Claim 1, further comprising: the zone further being intermittent in an amount of thermoplastic fiber in each material layer.

21. (original) An in-line formed web suitable for use as a composite fluid distribution and fluid retention layer in a disposable absorbent article according to Claim 20, wherein the amount of thermoplastic fiber in each material layer is varied by weight percent.

22. (currently amended) An in-line formed web suitable for use as a composite fluid distribution and fluid retention layer in a disposable absorbent article according to Claim 1, further comprising: the zone further being intermittent in a differing densities of the material layers.

23. (currently amended) An in-line formed web suitable for use as a composite fluid distribution and fluid retention layer in a disposable absorbent article

according to Claim 1, further comprising: the zone further being intermittent in differing thicknesses of the material layers.

24. (original) An in-line formed web suitable for use as a composite fluid distribution and fluid retention layer in a disposable absorbent article according to Claim 1, further comprising: the web having no discrete boundaries between the multiple layers of material.

25. (original) An in-line formed web suitable for use as a composite fluid distribution and fluid retention layer in a disposable absorbent article according to Claim 1, further comprising: the web having tissue boundaries between at least some of the multiple layers.

26. (original) An in-line formed web suitable for use as a composite fluid distribution and fluid retention layer in a disposable absorbent article according to Claim 1, wherein the material is in the form of air laid material.

27. (currently amended) An in-line formed, non-laminated web, the web having major surfaces in the X-Y plane and a depth in the Z direction, the web suitable for use as a composite fluid distribution and fluid retention layer in a disposable absorbent article, comprising:

- a) multiple layers of air laid composite material, at least two of the multiple

layers comprising both thermoplastic fibers and ~~absorbent~~ superabsorbent material;

b) the at least two multiple layers having different compositions of thermoplastic fibers and ~~superabsorbent~~ absorbent material compositions with different swelling rates;

c) the at least two multiple layers being in an opposing and adjacent relation and overlaid in the Z-axis direction of the web thereby creating a superabsorbent gradient in the Z-direction of the web;

d) at least one of the multiple layers having first and second zones of intermittent superabsorbent material deposition in one of a machine direction or a cross direction so as to have discontinuous zones in one of the machine direction or the cross direction, the first and second zones containing different compositions of superabsorbent material with different swelling rates;

e) the web having no discrete boundaries between the multiple layers of air laid material; and

f) whereby the composite web has a Z-direction gradient of air laid material layers; and zones of different ~~material layers~~ superabsorbent materials intermittently placed in one of the machine direction or the cross direction within at least one layer.

28.-30. (cancelled)